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SIPDIS

STATE ALSO PASS TO USAID  
USAID/W FOR A/AID ANDREW NATSIOS, JBRAUSE  
DCHA/OFDA GGOTTILIEB, MMARX, RTHAYER, BDEEMER  
AID/W FOR DCHA/OFDA  
SOUTH ASIA RESPONSE MANAGEMENT TEAM  
SOUTH ASIA EARTHQUAKE TASK FORCE  
DCHA/FFP FOR JONATHAN DWORKEN  
ANE DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR MARK WARD  
BANGKOK FOR OFDA SENIOR REGIONAL ADVISOR TOM DOLAN  
KATHMANDU FOR OFDA REGIONAL ADVISOR WILLIAM BERGER  
ROME PASS FODAG  
GENEVA FOR RMA AND NKYLOH  
NSC FOR JMELINE  
EUCOM FOR POLA/J3/J4/J5  
BRUSSELS FOR USAID PLERNER  
NEW YORK FOR TMALY  
SECDEF FOR SOLIC/PKHA, USDP/J3  
JOINT STAFF WASH DC FOR J3/J4/J5  
HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE FOR J3/J5

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [AEMR](#) [ASEC](#) [MASS](#) [ECON](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [OIIP](#) [OPRC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PK](#) [PKEAID](#)

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN - EARTHQUAKE: USAID/DART WATER AND  
SANITATION UPDATE: ADDRESSING PROBLEMS IN NWFP

REF: Islamabad 16881

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Summary  
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1. The USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) water and sanitation officer (WSO) in Mansehra is addressing critical sanitation and water supply issues in Mehra and other camps, and providing technical assistance to agencies working in earthquake-affected areas of Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP). In December 2005, the WSO accompanied Government of Pakistan (GOP) engineers on assessments in 35 destroyed and severely damaged communities. To provide surge capacity and additional oversight of water and sanitation activities, USAID has funded two staff positions through an NGO partner. A USAID/DART update of the water and sanitation situation in Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) is reported septel. End Summary.

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Addressing Water and Sanitation Problems in NWFP  
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2. USAID/DART WSOs are currently based at the US Embassy's Forward Operating Bases in Mansehra, NWFP, and Muzaffarabad, AJK, to monitor water and sanitation conditions in the earthquake zone and ensure adequate water and sanitation to prevent environmental health risks. A USAID/DART WSO has been conducting assessments and providing technical guidance to agencies implementing emergency water and sanitation programs. WSO recommendations have emphasized correcting critical gaps in community water and sanitation systems, and supporting field coordination.

3. As reported reftel, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) is coordinating water and sanitation issues in the affected areas of NWFP, with priority on interventions in camps. Mehra tent camp, located one hour north of Batagram on the Indus River, is currently the largest planned camp in the earthquake zone, with an estimated population of 16,000. The GOP has planned for Mehra to accommodate up to 30,000 people. According to the USAID/DART, the camp growth rate is declining, but may increase if weather conditions worsen in the higher elevations of the Allai Valley.

4. The USAID/DART WSO reports that UNICEF's coordination of water and sanitation activities in Mehra has generally been good. However, initial camp latrines built by contractors collapsed due to poor construction. Following an assessment of Mehra, the USAID/DART WSO worked with the GOP military and UNICEF to upgrade the latrine design, supervise repairs of collapsed latrines, and oversee the construction of new ones. In addition, the WSO established a construction tracking system to assure an adequate number of latrines were built to stay ahead of population increases at Mehra and other camps. UNICEF is working with a new contractor, Solidarites, to construct latrines and maintain existing ones.

5. Another concern in Mehra Camp was the reduced supply of drinking water due to technical problems with the camp's well. In response, the WSO provided guidance on proper well operation and arranged for US military electricians to rewire the control box. Currently, the well is operating at

full capacity. To assure that water supplies remained adequate, the WSO advised the camp management to construct a second well. This process is underway as of December 24. The WSO also worked directly in planning and implementation of backup water delivery to other camps.

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Providing Technical Support  
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16. Since arriving in Mansehra, the USAID/DART WSO has actively engaged with UN agencies, NGOs, and local GOP officials on water and sanitation issues, especially in the interagency cluster meetings in Balakot and Batagram. One important intervention by the WSO was focusing the cluster to support local authorities in conducting assessments and identifying priorities for reconstruction. During December, the WSO accompanied GOP engineers on assessments in 35 destroyed and severely damaged communities. USAID partners International Medical Corps (IMC) and ACTED have arranged for transport of materials to targeted communities. The WSO has also coordinated with UNICEF, IMC, and ACTED for interventions in Paras, where people are reportedly drinking water from the river.

17. According to the USAID/DART, UNICEF field staff have demonstrated strong technical skills in the water and sanitation sector, but are overstretched and unable to monitor closely projects in such a large coverage area. To augment UNICEF efforts, USAID funded two additional staff positions through NGO partner IMC to provide surge capacity and additional oversight of water and sanitation activities. One staff member is already on the ground and working on UNICEF water and sanitation activities.

18. To support sanitation activities and improve health surveillance, the USAID/DART WSO has been collaborating with partner agencies on disease reporting to monitor conditions, particularly in more densely populated camps. The WSO has arranged for waterborne hygiene disease reporting to support the water and sanitation clusters. Maintaining disease reports allow agencies to remain current on trends and provide advanced indication of potential outbreaks. The WSO has collaborated with the UN World Health Organization (WHO) to provide "early warning" information to field cluster meetings.

19. Sanitation and hygiene promotion are critical activities for curbing the spread of disease in urban and densely populated camps. Managing the use of latrines, as well as providing facilities with warm water for washing during the winter months are current priorities, especially in unorganized camps. To support improved hygiene and bathing, the WSO met with partner NGO Action Contre La Faim (ACF) and the UN Development Program (UNDP) to review a plan for heating water and setting aside a bathing area in camps. The WSO has provided recommendations to modify the program that ACF plans to initiate in Balakot.

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